

The Great American Hair Fetish

1. The Proposition

Boys' hair is too long
and girls' too short.
As with cats, you have to look
between their legs to tell.
This isn't good.

2. The High School Principal's Bad Dream

On Monday every pupil
comes in bald. On Tuesday
they all come in drag.
Wednesday, they don't show up
at all. Thursday the football team
is pregnant all but one.
Friday the girls come in
in miniskirts and don't wear
underwear; they've shaved
their pubic hair.
On Saturday his wife breaks out
with acne and on Sunday they despair.

3. Alarmed, the Townspeople Act

Barbers lower their rates
but only parents come.
Something must be done.
The town must be remade
a decent place to live.
Everyone under twenty-one
is shaved smooth as an egg.
The principal has this funny
feeling: *deja vu*.
No force is used that isn't
justified in isolated
instances: resisting arrest.

4. Exorcism

O may this house be safe
from dope fiends & their peer groups,
from activists & pacifists,
from bodily & mental illness
& clammy adolescent sex.

5. The Aftermath

Supermarket managers and
pharmacists become the first
civil libertarians: their
shelves are clogged with Brecht,
Vitalis, Brylcream, Head & Shoulders
and the rest. Vending machines
in gas stations' mens' rooms
continue to dispense
2-for-a-quarter prophylactics
(for the prevention of disease
only) at a brisk pace
but haven't moved a comb in weeks.
Perhaps we were too hasty,
some are willing to suggest
the barbers raise their prices back.
The town relents. It's May
and warming up. The kids have
itchy growing hair but still come
home too late. The parents don't
protest too much: they're digging in
for another long hot summer.

-- William Matthews

Aurora, New York

Reply to an Academic Dean

Dear Mr. Pinsker,

Saw your poem in College English and
I enjoyed it very much. Hope to see
more of them soon.

Sincerely,
Kenneth O'Brien, Dean

So you'd like to see more of them soon...
But do you think words spill on paper like concrete
And harden quickly into poetic canons?
(Good, I admit, for holding up administrations
Or, in your case, blowing up a college reputation.)
Sitting safely on your deanship
(Keeping up with the contributor's notes)
It must look easy to write more.
But, to be honest, it's more like blood
And every line that oozes out has its price.
(I wonder if you are willing to go yours?)
Perhaps we could both stand a transfusion --
Each, in his way, putting the essentials back in
circulation.
Hope to see more of you soon.